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EAST TIMOR SPEAKS

THE REPORT OF MR JOSE RAMOS HORTA , MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF EAST TIMOR , TO THE UNITED NATIONS DECOLONISATION COMMITTEE (COMMITTEE OF 24) ON SEPTEMBER 8, 1976

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The CHAIRMAN: The next speaker is the representative of the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN). Accordingly, I invite Mr. José Ramos Horta, member of the Central Committee, of the Executive Committee and of the Political and Military Committee of FRETILIN to take a place at the Committee table and to make his statement.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Horta (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) took a place at the Committee table.

Mr. HORTA (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor): It is not my intention to elaborate too much on the question of East Timor as it has already been lengthily discussed at the various sessions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council in December 1975 and April 1976. In the course of these sessions I had the opportunity to present the view of the Government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. I believe, though, that it is important to stress some facts.

On 25 April 1974, the Portuguese colonial empire collapsed as the result of the heroic struggle of the peoples of Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome Principe and East Timor. Right after the fall of the centuries-old empire, two puppet groups were created by the Portuguese authorities in East Timor -- the Popular Democratic Association of Timor (APODETI) and the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) -- each one serving interests alien to the people of East Timor. APODETI came out with a programme that was an insult to the East Timorese people -- recolonization of their country by Indonesia. UDT came out with a programme whose basic aim was to maintain the Portuguese presence in the Territory. This was a party of landlords, coffee plantation owners, cattle dealers, senior public servants, and so on.

The Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) was born many years before the fall of fascism in Portugal. It is interesting to note that at the time, during our illegal activities, there were attempts by our leaders to approach the Government of Indonesia, seeking support. But it was a shock for the leaders when the answer of certain Indonesian officials at that time was that it would mean interference if Indonesia co-operated with an underground movement that threatened the Portuguese administration. Never did

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did the Government of Indonesia show any interest in, let alone concern for, the fate of the people of East Timor. Therefore it is not surprising that the people of East Timor cannot at any cost accept the idea of joining Indonesia. It is not surprising, therefore, that the so-called APODETI party never enjoyed support among the people. Academics, journalists, members of the Australian Parliament and church leaders who visited East Timor during 1974-1975 have been unanimous in stating on several occasions that APODETI was the smallest party in East Timor, with less than 5 per cent of support among the people. Even the leading Jakarta daily newspaper, Sinar Harapan, stated in a series of special reports on the situation in East Timor in October 1974 that, while FRETILIN was clearly the most popular and the best organized party, APODETI was the smallest, having the support of only a fraction of the people. The reason for this, according to the Sinar Harapan, was that the people of East Timor realized that APODETI was "prepared to sell the nation".

By August 1975, FRETILIN was without doubt the major political force in East Timor, with an extremely well-organized movement enjoying deep grass roots support, as was written by Bruce Juddery in the prestigious Canberra Times. In January 1975, FRETILIN accepted continual approaches from UDT to establish a coalition. But in May 1975 it was UDT which broke this coalition unilaterally -- and I stress the word "unilaterally". It should be noted that the ending of the coalition was preceded by a visit of two leaders of UDT to Jakarta, where they had lengthy meetings with General Ali Murtopo, Chief of the Indonesian CIA and General Panggabean, Minister of Defence. Both advised the visitors to break the coalition with FRETILIN because that movement was communist-inspired.

On 11 August 1975, UDT, in collaboration with APODETI and several senior Portuguese officials -- such as the Chief of Police, Lieutenant Colonel Maggiolo Gouveia and Major Lino -- launched a military coup and demanded immediate independence from Portugal. Following this action, a number of FRETILIN militants were brutally murdered, including young students who were in the countryside working among the people in literacy campaigns, health centres and co-operatives. In view of such a unilateral and brutal action by the extreme right-wing forces, what, then, should be the attitude of FRETILIN? Certainly the answer was to counter this armed aggression. When the FRETILIN Central Committee issued the

order for a general armed insurrection, many thousands of peasants and workers throughout the country took up arms on 15 August, most of them armed with bows and arrows, spears and knives. On 20 August, the East Timorese soldiers took the side of FRETILIN, left their barracks and joined the struggle for national liberation.

It should be noted that on 11 August the FRETILIN Central Committee, which had already established its headquarters in the mountains south of Dili, issued a proposal for negotiations and called on the Portuguese Government to restore order. But while the Portuguese army failed to take any action to prevent further deterioriation of the situation it allowed the so-called Anti-Communist Movement to continue its brutal actions. However, it took FRETILIN only two weeks to completely eliminate the extreme right-wing forces from the Territory. Leaders of the so-called Anti-Communist Movement fled to Indonesia, to Australia and to Portugal, but nearly the entire central committees of both UDT and APODETI were captured by FRETILIN. By mid-September, peace and order had been restored in East Timor. This was widely witnessed by nearly 50 foreign observers who visited East Timor during the three months of FRETILIN administration. A number of journalists, film-makers, church leaders, members of aid organizations and members of Parliament visited the Territory and travelled extensively. I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Special Committee on Decolonization to the most recent Bulletin, Decolonization, No. 7, 1976, "Issue on East Timor", which, I believe, is a valid contribution to the understanding of the question of the Territory. FRETILIN was the de facto government in a de facto independent State. Within a short period of time the basic infrastructures were put into operation, such as roads and transport communications. Telecommunications with the outside world were re-established. The administration was functioning. Shops were reopened. But, in the meantime, FRETILIN was eager to accept the Portuguese Government as the administering Power in the Territory and to carry on the decolonization process. Foreign observors could see Portuguese flags flying in front of the government palace. For three months, FRETILIN sent telegrams continually to the Lisbon Government calling for negotiations. The FRETILIN Central Committee despatched delegates to Australia in order to contact Australian Government representatives and other diplomats

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accredited in that country, particularly Indonesian and Portuguese diplomats. On 16 September, FRETILIN issued a statement proposing the formation of a joint police force along the border region between forces from East Timor and Indonesians. This proposal was rejected by Indonesia's Minister of Defence. FRETILIN's Central Committee sent messages continually to Jakarta proposing bilateral talks. I was assigned by the FRETILIN Central Committee to propose to the Australian Government that it sponsor a four-party round-table conference of representatives of the Portuguese, Australian, Indonesian and East Timorese Governments. The then Foreign Minister of Australia, Senator Willesee, rejected this proposal. The FRETILIN Central Committee sent invitations to member Governments of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to visit the Territory and to assess the situation. But, needless to say, all our efforts were rejected.

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In the meantime, along the border Indonesian regular troops had crossed into our territory. Indonesian naval vessels, helicopters and tanks were used in the assault against the villages of the coastal region. At that time FRETILIN continually sent messages to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the Security Council, to the Portuguese Government and to a number of Governments around the world denouncing Indonesian aggression.

On 28 November, the Central Committee of FRETILIN came to the conclusion that there was no alternative but the declaration of independence. The Democratic Republic of East Timor was then established. East Timor, the former Portuguese colony, became an independent State. Formal recognition was immediately extended by a number of countries, such as the glorious People's Republic of Mozambique, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and the Republic of Guinea. Many other Governments voiced their sympathy and unconditional support to the newly independent State, among them the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Democratic Kampuchea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Lao People's Republic. Dozens of organizations around the world welcomed the new nation. But on 7 December Indonesia launched an all-out invasion of the territory with thousands of troops backed by air and naval forces.

Immediately after the declaration of independence by the Democratic Republic of East Timor, it was reported that the so-called Anti-Communist Movement made a declaration of integration with Indonesia. But, one of the very men whom the Indonesians brought to the United Nations to address the Security Council in December, José Martins, President of the KOTA Party, has since confessed, in a statement to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, concerning the declaration of integration with Indonesia:

> "This is a farce. The declaration of integration of East Timor into Indonesia was a farce because it was made in Bali, in Indonesia, on 2 December 1975. While FRETILIN made the unilateral declaration of independence of East Timor on 28 November 1975, in Dili, the capital of the territory, our 'Anti-Communist Movement' declared

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integration of the territory some 1,000 kilometres away, in Bali, in the luxurious Peneda View Hotel which belongs to Colonel Sugianto, General Ali Murtopo's assistant. It was a real farce -- the whole thing -- without a mandate of our people."

General Assembly resolution 3485 (XXX), adopted at its 2439th meeting on 12 December 1975, states:

"1. Calls upon all States to respect the inalienable right of the people of Portuguese Timor to self-determination, freedom and independence and to determine their future political status in accordance with the principle of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

"...

"4. Strongly deplores the military intervention of the armed forces of Indonesia in Portuguese Timor;

"5. Calls upon the Government of Indonesia to desist from further violation of the territorial integrity of Portuguese Timor and to withdraw without delay its armed forces..."

It should be recalled that that resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 72 votes in favour, to a mere 10, with 43 abstentions.

On 22 December 1975, the Security Council unanimously adopted its resolution 384 (1975),

"Deploring the intervention of the armed forces of Indonesia in East Timor,

"...

"2. Calls upon the Government of Indonesia to withdraw without delay all its forces from the Territory."

On 22 April 1976, a second Security Council resolution on the subject was adopted by 12 votes to none, with 2 abstentions. Operative paragraph 2 of resolution 389 (1976)

"Calls upon the Government of Indonesia to withdraw without further delay all its forces from the Territory."

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Needless to say, the Government of Indonesia has bluntly defied the various United Nations resolutions and has continued the armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of East Timor and its naval force maintains a blockade around the island. The Government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor, which is functioning in vast liberated areas, reports that the Indonesian Air Force has been continuously bombing villages, cultivated areas, schools and health centres. Those reports have been confirmed by independent sources. For instance, the Djakarta correspondent of the London Guardian has said:

> "Armed with tanks, incendiary bombs and toxic sprays, and assisted by naval bombardments and a blockade, they /the Indonesian troops/ face a FRETILIN force of at most 15,000 trained men" -- equipped with rifles, light machine-guns and mortars captured from the Portuguese NATO stock in August 1975, as well as from Indonesian camps."

The Guardian also reports:

> "Even 'pro-Indonesian' figures support FRETILIN charges of Indonesian brutality; a Provisional Government /the puppet 'Government' set up by Indonesia/ spokesman admitted that 60,000 Timorese -- mostly women and children -- had been killed through Indonesian excesses."

It continued:

> "Catholic sources report that the Bishop of Dili alleged that Indonesian troops had looted churches and ordered priests to procure women for them."

It has been nearly a year since the armed forces of Indonesia invaded the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Australian, Japanese, United States of America and Singapore sources have confirmed that between 35,000 and 45,000 Indonesian troops are still in East Timor. According to Anthony Goldstone of the Guardian,

> "... the Indonesian troops engaged in East Timor come from special commands, including the marines, the army commandos and the élite units of the three Javanese divisions."

It should be recalled that the army commandos -- RPKAD -- played a leading role in the massacres of 1965-1966 when nearly 1 million Indonesians were killed.

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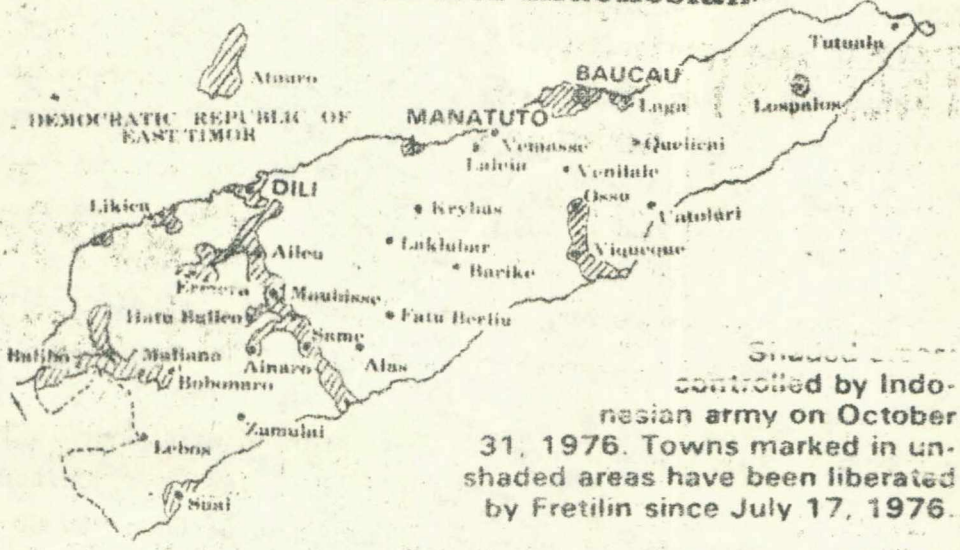
Contrary to Djakarta's expectations, the war in East Timor is far from over. Most of the territory -- 75 to 85 per cent -- is administered by the Revolutionary Government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. The 12-month-old war in East Timor has cost Indonesia approximately 10,000 casualties and over $US 100 million. Indonesian war expenses in East Timor have been conservatively estimated at $US 12 million a month.

It should be noted that when an earthquake recently hit West Papua -- Irian Jaya -- there were no helicopters available to carry relief supplies to the devastated areas. Many thousands of Irianese starved because of lack of food supplies and medicine. According to the Indonesian Governor of West Papua in a press conference in Djakarta, as reported in the Australian press, Indonesia's helicopters were largely committed to East Timor.

"Indonesia's Vietnam..."

Fretilin encircles Indonesians



Shaded areas controlled by Indonesian army on October 31, 1976. Towns marked in unshaded areas have been liberated by Fretilin since July 17, 1976.

All levels of the Indonesian Army now regard East Timor as "Indonesia's Vietnam", an Indonesian general recently told a European supporter of Fretilin.

Many of their elite soldiers have been withdrawn from East Timor to strengthen Jakarta against a possible coup, the general said. Poorly trained soldiers from East Java have replaced the elite troops who themselves performed "very badly" in the guerrilla war.

The Indonesian army now controls only the same amount of area as it did last February, with the exception of Ermera. All its offensives during the past dry season have been defeated. The wet season has begun, making new offensives extremely difficult.

Indonesian control is limited to some roads and the towns and villages along them. Radio Maubere reports that Indonesian forces in Lospalos and Ossu are surrounded. Fretilin controls most areas around Bacau, the second main town. There has been fierce fighting around Susi, Hatu Bulico, Ainaro and on the road between Same and Betano.

Radio Maubere reported on October 24 that the village of Madebeno, only 10 kms from the capital Dili was being shelled by Indonesian forces. It can be assumed that Madebeno is under Fretilin control.

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The Government of Jakarta, after failing to occupy the territory militarily and to annihilate FRETILIN, resorted to political manoeuvres to present the case of East Timor as a fait accompli. So on 31 May 1976 the Indonesian Government masterminded a so-called People's Assembly. According to The Washington Post of 1 June,

"only 5 of the 28 council members had been elected and no opportunity was given to meet the representatives."

The same report added that this so-called People's Representative Council

"came to a unanimous decision in an hour and twenty minutes".

The Washington Post correspondent also said that the foreign correspondents specially invited by the Jakarta Government to attend the ceremony were allowed to stay in Dili for only three hours.

I should like to quote some editorials of Australian conservative newspapers relating to this "act of no choice". For instance, The Age of 3 June wrote:

"Even the most cynical and oppressive régimes sometimes like to give a semblance of legitimacy to their brutal actions. Thus Indonesia this week indulged in a shameless charade to pretend to the world that the people of East Timor are eager to have their territory annexed by their powerful neighbour."

The Australian of 1 June said:

"Despite the obvious problems, international opinion was entitled to expect that some real effort would be made to have the Timorese people express their desires for the future: the interests of one nation in a bordering region, however legitimate, cannot be allowed to overrule internationally respected principles of democratic behaviour."

Later on, continuing the farce, Indonesia announced the annexation of East Timor on 17 July, and so it is now an "internal matter of Indonesia". But the whole reality in East Timor is that the people, under the leadership of FRETILIN, continue to wage a protracted war of resistance against Indonesian aggression. It should be recalled that when a top Indonesian delegation visited East Timor in late July it failed to visit Baucau, Bobonaro, Suai and Same,

as had been planned. The delegation was headed by Minister Prof. J.B. Sumarlien. The mission visited only Dili, the capital, the little enclave of Oe-Cusse and the tiny village of Balibo close to the border with Indonesian Timor. While Indonesian officials justified the failure of the mission with "cloudy weather", foreign correspondents and diplomats accompanying the mission reported that FRETILIN forces were very active within these areas and in a radius of 10 kilometers of Dili, as reported in the Sydney Morning Herald of Australia, The Economist of London, and others.

General Suharto, President of the Indonesian Republic, said that

"the FRETILIN independence movement still possessed strength in areas of the former Portuguese colony",

according to The Age of 26 August. The report went on:

"The President's remarks were the first public admission that FRETILIN is still a force to be reckoned with in the territory."

The Indonesian daily, Kompas, quoted the President, General Suharto, as saying that

"for this reason, Indonesia must try to convince members of the movement (FRETILIN) to join the government side (Indonesia) as soon as possible."

It is crystal clear that, in spite of all Indonesian military brutalities and the farce of the so-called formal annexation on 17 July, the reality is that the people of East Timor, under their sole legitimate vanguard, FRETILIN, continue to wage a protracted war of resistance. Success of the struggle should also be evaluated from the achievements of the Government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor in the liberated areas: 200 schools and 50,000 children and adults learning to read and write in their own language, Tetum, which is totally distinct from the Indonesian language; over 200 nurses and barefoot doctors have been performing their duties after three months' training; traditional medicine has been improved and is being practised -- this has saved many hundreds of lives; the national radio, Radio Maubere, broadcasts three times a week in Tetum, English and Portuguese, as well as in the Indonesian language, with special programmes for the Indonesian soldiers and people -- as a result, over 100 Indonesian soldiers have joined FRETILIN and

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according to The Guardian, quoting an Indonesian officer, there have been cases of troops refusing to go on patrol and helicopter teams refusing to leave their bases"; the FALANTIL, the armed forces of liberation of East Timor, now counts on a 15,000 strong Regular Army which is well trained and well equipped, a 30,000 member militia, a 1,000 strong army of women under the direction of the People's Organization of East Timorese Women and a 1,000 strong Youth Army under the direction of the East Timor National Union of Students.

Mr. Tony Smith of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation and CBS Evening News, commenting on the structure of the FRETILIN Army, said:

"It is a strange army. Every decision is reached by a democratic vote. They vote for who will lead them. They vote for when and how they will attack. They vote on when they will break off an attack and return home. Only their elected leader can override the vote, but if the soldiers feel strongly enough about his decision they can have another meeting and vote him out of office."

I believe that, beyond the efforts of the Indonesian Government to justify its invasion of East Timor "to restore peace and order", the truth is that Indonesia has become some kind of policeman in South-East Asia. With the extraordinary victories of the heroic peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, the balance of power in that region has been radically changed and Indonesia has perforce become the stronghold of imperialism, which has now changed its conventional policy of direct intervention and adopted the strategy of war by proxy. East Timor is situated in a strategic area vital to the imperialist economic and nuclear strategy in the region. Even during the Second World War East Timor was invaded by Japanese forces and became the theatre of a bloody war in which 40,000 East Timorese were killed. The prestigious journalist, Michael Richardson, the South-East Asia correspondent for the conservative newspapers The Age and the Sydney Morning Herald, wrote that

"the control of East Timor by a friendly anti-communist government was a matter of direct strategic interest to the United States. This is because the fastest and safest way for American nuclear submarines to pass submerged between the Pacific and Indian Oceans is through the little known deep-water straits of Ombai Wetae north of East Timor."

Mr. Richardson added that

"the strategic location of East Timor is one reason why the United States administration has readily acquiesced to Indonesia's takeover of the disputed Portuguese colony and to its campaign to crush the left wing FRETILIN independent movement."

It should be recalled that President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger were in Jakarta when Indonesian warships and its air force were heading for East Timor on 7 December.

For nearly two years since the fall of fascism in Portugal the anti-communist Government of Indonesia has launched the spectre of communism in order to persuade United States and Australian officials that FRETILIN was a communist inspired movement and that East Timor under a FRETILIN government would be another Cuba in that region. Of course, I surely would not argue whether FRETILIN is a Marxist-Leninist party, or whatever.

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The best answer to such an argument was provided by His Excellency Ambassador Salim Salim in his statement of 18 December 1975 before the Security Council. He said:

> "At this stage I do not wish to go into the question of whether or not FRETILIN is a leftist organization or whether its existence would pose a danger to Indonesia. However, whether or not the belief of Jakarta is right, it is not open for any State to dictate the form of government to be adopted by a people that is to become independent. To agree to that proposal is to jeopardize all the small States whose existence has been guaranteed only by a scrupulous adherence to the principle of our Charter with regard to respect for territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of others." (S/PV.1867, p.11)

It is crystal clear that Indonesian aggression against the Democratic Republic of East Timor was a breach of the United Nations Charter and all subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. It is clearly exposed in the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and Protection of their Independence and Sovereignty. More recently, the Fifth Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Countries held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in its final declaration stated its support for the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence and recalled the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. We hope that the Committee of Twenty-Four, which has for many years been helping to bring about an end to colonialism and neocolonialism around the world, will not now abdicate giving its most active support to the just struggle of the people of East Timor to consolidate their independence and sovereignty under the leadership of FRETILIN.